

EDUCATION

~~Quality education is vital to the future of the community as a whole and for each individual. With city and county growth, though, comes the need for additional educational facilities. School districts currently face significant financial challenges in maintaining existing sites, providing for new facilities, and continuing their core goal of providing high quality educational services. Public and private colleges and universities also have similar struggles, as they look for ways to improve their facilities and campuses.~~

~~This section looks at the future educational facilities throughout the city and county, including primary and secondary education services, community colleges and trade schools, colleges and universities. It also and addresses a series of principles and strategies to be pursued in meeting the community's future educational needs.~~

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Encourage cooperative planning and site development between the City and public and private educational institutions.

Continue to coordinate development proposals with all the school districts in the County.

Lincoln Public Schools shall be the only public school district within the City of Lincoln. The Lincoln Public School boundary will continue to expand as the city limits of Lincoln expand.

Elementary and Middle schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them. Child care centers should be located within neighborhoods and near schools and parks when possible.

The image displays how the joint school and park sites principles might work together in future neighborhoods. This principle has already been applied in areas of Lincoln, such as the Eastridge Elementary/ Taylor Park in east Lincoln or Humann Elementary / Cripple Creek Park in southeast Lincoln. Joint facilities should be planned with all new school facilities and during renovation projects when feasible.

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) has opened two new high schools; Lincoln Southwest, at South 14th Street and Pine Lake Road, in the fall of 2002, and Lincoln North Star, near North 33rd and Folkways Boulevard, in the fall of 2003.

LPS currently owns property for potential school sites that was acquired to support the future development shown in the City-County 1994 Comprehensive Plan. ~~In addition, LPS owns 3 other sites between 84th and 98th Streets in the Stevens Creek drainage basin.~~ Staff from LPS and City departments continue to work together to identify potential schools sites that meet the needs of the present Plan.

Lincoln Public Schools has made a substantial investment in renovating and improving existing schools throughout the Lincoln area. For example, between 1987 and June, 2000, LPS spent over \$64 million on improvements to 25 older elementary and middle schools (source: LPS letter, June 2000). In addition, 4 new schools, and renovations and additions to numerous existing schools, were approved by a bond issue in 2006.

In May 2003 LPS completed a 10 year master plan to address the space needs for renovation and new construction of facilities within the district. In addition, the Student Housing Task Force completed a 10 year plan, which was adopted by the LPS School board in December 2005 as apart of their 10 year plans. LPS will use both plans the Master Plan as a guide as it annually develops renovation and construction plans. The Student Housing Task Force Report and the LPS Master Plan are adopted as an approved components of the Comprehensive Plan and will provide direction for future actions and serve as the basis for facilities planning and improvements.

Numerous schools that were 50 or more years old have received new additions such as library/media centers, gymnasiums, or classrooms. LPS has also been actively removing asbestos and making improvements during renovations such as updating heating and cooling systems. This commitment to maintaining older schools is critical to maintaining the vitality of the surrounding neighborhoods. Schools continue to serve as the heart of many older neighborhoods.

In the past few years, LPS has faced significant financial challenges in funding the operation of existing schools. As the community grows, new elementary, secondary, and high schools will be needed during the planning period. Funding for new schools will be necessary in order to avoid overcrowding existing schools. Several elementary schools built within the past ten years are already at their capacity. ~~With current legislative limits placed upon the building and site fund, the only alternative for funding is voter approved bonds.~~

RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

There are many challenges facing the 12 public school districts serving residents of Lancaster County.

All face financial hurdles in their ability to serve their students. Several school districts, most notably Rokeby, Cheney, and Waverly School districts will also be impacted by expansion of the Lincoln city limits. In addition state legislation in regards to Class I school districts may require consolidation of some districts with larger districts as well.

In particular, the small districts of Rokeby and Cheney to the south of Lincoln will be impacted by growth in the next 25 years (Tier I) and it is ultimately shown that their elementary school buildings themselves will be inside the city

limits sometime after the first tier of urbanization. The City, LPS and each school district impacted will need to coordinate efforts in the future.

Rural school districts also need to plan to accommodate areas designated for acreage residential development. Acreage residential areas provide additional tax revenue, but also the need for more financial resources in order to provide additional transportation services and educational facilities. Grouping acreage residential areas into predesignated areas allows for rural school districts to be able to plan for adequate transportation and educational services in advance of development.

P PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

Additional private and parochial schools are also anticipated during the planning period. The Catholic Diocese has several sites for potential future schools, including schools near 33rd and Yankee Hill Road and 98th and Old Cheney Road. The City should work with private entities to coordinate development and infrastructure plans around new school sites.

While these public and private institutions are governed separately from the Lincoln City Council and Lancaster County Board, there are significant opportunities to work together toward common and mutually beneficial goals.

C COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL) will continue to be a major educational resource and employer in the community. UNL prepares campus master plans designating areas for future campus development and expansion. UNL is also a partner in the Joint Antelope Valley Authority which will be redeveloping land adjacent to the Downtown campus.

Nebraska Wesleyan University (NWU), Union College, and Southeast Community College also have significant campuses in Lincoln and are major educational resources for the community. Each institution has the potential to further integrate with and benefit from interaction with the surrounding neighborhoods and the community as a whole. The future boundaries and development of NWU is part of the “North 48th Street/University Place Plan: Neighborhood Revitalization & Transportation Analysis, adopted in 2004.” Joint efforts with each institution are encouraged in the future.

S STRATEGIES

Promote the development, design, and use of public and private facilities to assure cooperative planning and maximum utilization, when appropriate. Encourage joint school and park facilities, wherever possible.

Schools are vital to the preservation of existing neighborhoods and every effort should be made to enhance and retain ‘neighborhood schools.’

Support the necessary expansion of education facilities while remaining sensitive to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Provide universities, colleges, and the community with a means by which university research findings can move easily into the commercial world for economic development.

Coordinate school site selection with subarea plans and with community open space and trails system. Develop new schools on sites where they serve as the heart of the neighborhood.

Coordinate plans of Southeast Community College with future land development immediately to the east to ensure that new development is compatible and provides employment and housing opportunities for students.

Coordinate neighborhood revitalization and transportation plans for the surrounding areas with Nebraska Wesleyan University, Union College and Lincoln School of Commerce.

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